



UNITED STATES SUBMARINE VETERANS, INC.

**Groton Base Commander – John C Carcioppolo
40 School Street Groton, CT 06340-3940**

Testimony of

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“Silent Service” Connecticut license plate Liaison**

**Transportation Committee Public Hearing
Wednesday February 23, 2011**

Proposed HB 5947

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MOTORCYCLE VERSION OF THE "SILENT SERVICE" SPECIAL
INTEREST LICENSE PLATE.**

Introduction:

My name is Harrison Solt. I live in Gales Ferry and have been a resident of Connecticut since 1975. I am the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI) Groton Base Liaison to the Connecticut DMV for the “Silent Service” special interest license plate. On behalf of the Officers and Members of USSVI Groton Base I appreciate this opportunity to address the Transportation Committee to voice my personal and that of Groton Base support for the establishment of a Connecticut “Silent Service” license plate for motorcycles.

Background:

USSVI was started in 1963 and incorporated in 1964 because of the shared belief of a group of World War II submarine veterans that there should be an organization open to all submarine veterans, not just those who ably served in World War II. The group wanted to make it known that those lost on submarines, in the line of duty, would never be forgotten.

In Groton Connecticut, “the submarine capital of the world”, the group contacted past and present shipmates about their idea. Favorable responses were received from submariners throughout the North East and especially Connecticut.

Several organizing meetings were held in Connecticut and New Jersey. The final organizing meeting was held October 12, 1963 in Orange, NJ. Several months later the organization was officially chartered and incorporated in the State of Connecticut. Today there are 162 USSVI Bases with almost 13,000 members. Approximately 2500 are members of Groton Base.

The Groton Base started immediately and held meeting in the Knights of Columbus hall in Groton. Attendance at those early meeting was between 60 – 75 members. About a year later it was determined that the Groton Base needed a building of their own. A raffle for a gold Cadillac was conducted to raise the down payment for the 40 School Street Groton building. The building was purchased in 1966 and remains the Groton Base home today. Because the organization was chartered and incorporated in Connecticut and the fact Groton Base owned its own building it was designated USSVI National Headquarters. USSVI Groton Base’s motto is “First and Finest”. Groton Base has member from all parts of Connecticut and a satellite Base located in western Connecticut.

The United States Submarine Veterans Incorporated Creed:

“To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a

constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution."

Groton Base Today:

Groton Base is very fortunate to have a dedicated meeting hall, located at 40 School Street Groton CT which houses a library, a club, meeting rooms, a stage and much memorabilia. Monthly meetings and many special events take place in the club house.

We are a very active and community oriented Base, involved in the Military community as well as the surrounding communities. Each year for the Submarine Birthday, Memorial Day and Veterans Day we hold services at the National WW II Memorial East to remember those who gave their lives in pursuit of their duties in Submarines. On Thanksgiving, members and volunteers serve well over 800 Thanksgiving dinners to SUBASE New London personnel, shut-ins, police officers, and first responders throughout the area who are unable to be with their families.

Throughout the year SUBVETS participates in Submarine School graduations and local parades. We conduct a local and national scholarship program, and contribute time, talent, and monetarily too many worthy causes. The vast majority of supported organizations and causes are based in Connecticut. SUBVETS Groton Base is the sponsor of Sea Scout Ship DRAGON Ship 584 and has a robust "Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS)" program which supports hospitalized children statewide who are dealing with significant health issues. Our Veteran's Liaison meets regularly with elected officials, following which he briefs the membership assuring all are well informed on veteran's benefits and services. The Base Color Guard participates in many local and statewide parades, ceremonial events, and upon requests provides services to civic and fraternal organizations. The Base Chaplin and the Honors Details renders gun salutes on national holidays and conducts ceremonies and memorial services, bringing much comfort to families, at services for submariners.

The Groton Base maintains the Submarine Veterans WW II Memorial East, located at the corner of Bridge and Thames Streets in Groton. Members serve as Docents at the Historic Ship NAUTILUS and Museum and serve as greeters for cruise ship port visits to New London.

Our House Committee plans, organizes, and holds many member events, dinners, brunches, etc. There are usually dinners once a month, and brunches every Sunday, as well as seasonal and holiday dinners and events. Throughout the year special events such as guest speaker programs and holiday parties are held. The Groton Base facility is also used by many submarine crews who hold their reunion in Groton. Some Submarine Base New London personnel hold their retirement ceremonies at the Club House.

All of this activity insures an informed, active, vibrant organization and membership. USSVI Groton Base is truly the "First and the Finest". We fully support and put our nation, state and community first.

"Silent Service" special interest license plate:

Since its inception the "Silent Service" (SS) organizational special interest license plate for automobiles and trucks has been well received and a great success. Thirty to fifty Connecticut residents transfer to the plate each year. For many in the military community, this is one factor why they register their vehicle in Connecticut, rather than their home of record, during a tour of duty in Connecticut. Currently there are almost 400 SS license plates in use. When seen, many people comment on the license plate, engaging the submarine veteran in conversation or simply thanking him for his service to our country. This brings great pride to the organization, the individual, and supports the USSVI creed. Qualified individuals often see a license, seek information, and, as a result, join the organization and apply for a SS license plate. Membership in "good standing" in USSVI is required to apply for a "Silent Service" license plate.

"Silent Service" Motorcycle special interest license plate:

USSVI has many members who enjoy riding and owning motorcycles. Some Bases, including the Groton Base, have active motorcycle groups or "clubs". These members combine their submarine heritage, camaraderie, patriotism, and love of motorcycles together. Many have CT "Silent Service" license plates on their automobile or truck. It is a natural extension to want to show this same organizational pride and patriotism when one is on their motorcycle. Membership in "good standing" in USSVI will remain the criteria to apply for a "Silent Service" motorcycle license plate.

Closing remarks:

The Officers and Membership of USSVI Groton Base strongly support the creation of a Connecticut "Silent Service" license plate for motorcycles. We have every confidence that, like the automobile and truck program, the motorcycle license plate will be well received. Many members have already expressed their eagerness to apply for the plate. We seek your favorable support of House Bill HB5947. Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony before your Committee.

W. H. Salt

